

Claims

add A17

- 5 1. A method of producing a skeleton for a steering wheel rim made of sheet metal, said method comprising the following steps:  
a flat metal blank is cut in such a way that it has a ring-shaped section,  
said ring-shaped section is deformed in such a way that it acquires a hollow profile which in cross-section encloses an angle  $\alpha$  of more than  $180^\circ$ , and  
said deformation is carried out at least partially in that said ring-shaped section  
10 is moved between two rotatable rollers.
2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said deformation comprises a step in which said flat ring-shaped section is deformed by drawing in such a way that it acquires an essentially U-shaped profile.
3. The method according to Claim 2, wherein said U-shaped profile has two  
15 legs of differing lengths and said rollers deform the longer one of said legs.
4. The method according to Claim 3, wherein said rollers bend said radially outer leg radially inwards.
5. The method according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of said rollers has a stepped peripheral surface.
- 20 6. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said profile encloses at least approximately  $270^\circ$  after said deformation step.
7. The method according to Claim 1, wherein, before said deformation step, a number of holes is stamped into said ring-shaped section.
8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein said metal blank has a section  
25 for defining at least one spoke and a section for defining a hub, said sections continuing into each other in one piece.

9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein, by means of drawing, said ring-shaped section first acquires a U-shaped profile with a radially outer longer leg that is bent radially inwards between said rollers, said section for said spoke being bent into a U-shape by said drawing.

5 10. A vehicle steering wheel comprising a one-piece metal skeleton which has a ring-shaped section for a steering wheel rim of said steering wheel, said ring-shaped section being produced by a method comprising the following steps: a flat metal blank is cut in such a way that said ring-shaped section is obtained, said ring-shaped section is deformed in such a way that it acquires a hollow profile  
10 which in cross-section encloses an angle of more than  $180^\circ$ , and said deformation is carried out at least partially in that said ring-shaped section is moved between two rotatable rollers,

at least one shell part being provided which is associated to said hollow profile, said shell part closing said hollow profile in order to form a channel in  
15 said steering wheel rim.

11. The vehicle steering wheel according to Claim 10, further comprising at least one section for defining a spoke and one section for defining a hub, said channel in said steering wheel rim continuing into a channel in said spoke, and said channel in said spoke being produced by deforming said at least one section  
20 of said spoke and by closing said section by means of a shell part

12. The vehicle steering wheel according to Claim 10, wherein said ring-shaped section is provided with a number of holes.